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Addendum

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BURUNDI

I. BACKGROUND

Burundi has an area of 27,834 km^2 and lies between the meridians 29° 00 E and 30° 54 E and the parallels 2° 20 S and 4° 28 S. Although landlocked, it has a shoreline on lake Tanganyika, in the west of the Rift Valley. Its terrain is generally rugged, characterized by steep hills whose slopes render the soil vulnerable to erosion.

The country's altitude increases in stages from west to east, dividing the country into five main geographical zones:

- The western plain;
- The western slopes of the Congo-Nile watershed;
- The Congo-Nile watershed;
- The central plateaux; and
- The eastern depressions.

The climate is generally bimodal but with a tendency towards unimodal in the western plain. The dry season usually lasts from June to September. Rains (800 mm/yr in the plain, 2,000 mm/yr on the watershed and 1,600 mm/yr on the central plateaux) fall from February to May and from October to December. There is little variation in temperature between the seasons. The mean annual temperature in the western plain is 24° C and, on the watershed, 15° C.

The country's biological diversity is notable for the conjunction of Zambezian interlacustrine and Afromontane influences. Its position at a bio-geographical crossroads and its different altitude zones make Burundi particularly rich in fauna and flora.

The population of Burundi is estimated at 6 million, with a mean density of 234 persons per km^2. The annual rate of population growth is 3 per cent per year, with 47 per cent of the population below 15 years of age and 51.35 per cent female.

The per capita gross domestic product (GDP) was $180 in 1992 but in 1997, as a result of the crisis which struck the country, it declined by a further 7 per cent. The macroeconomic situation is difficult, as foreign trade is impeded by the country's landlocked situation and a large portion of its resources are absorbed by foreign debt repayments.

The very low literacy and school attendance rates are a brake on the mobilization of Burundi's human resources for sustainable development.

Where institutional arrangements are concerned, environmental matters fall under the Ministry of Land Management and Environment, established in 1988, which is responsible for implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

II. STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND POLICIES

Burundi's national environment strategy and its action plan date back to 1997. With their traditional focus on the economic assets deliberately produced by people through their work and made available for trade, development policies have neglected the role played by nature in maintaining and regenerating the production potential. As a result, these policies have systematically promoted the growth of production infrastructures to the detriment of the infrastructures of nature and of the assets and services offered by nature.

At the same time, of all the products of human activity, economic policies have been interested only in goods and market services and have ignored the impact on the environment which these almost invariably have. Accordingly, production activities have only been evaluated in relation to their realizable cash value and not in terms of their total effects, namely, their economically measurable effects and their impacts on the environment. As a result, certain economic achievements are ephemeral, since they depend on the wasteful exploitation of natural resources and certain so-called productive activities might actually be counterproductive, since the environmental damage to third parties outweighs the social value of the economic production.

The national environmental strategy is designed in an endeavour to address this imbalance. The national environmental strategy is based on research materials, a process of analysis and consultation and proposals put forward by the various category of stakeholders, primarily, those concerned with the management of natural resources and the environment. Multidisciplinary groups have been set up to give further consideration to such important areas as:

- Coordinated environmental management;
- Land and water management;
- Crop farming, livestock-raising and forestry;
- Industry and trade;
- Housing and health;
- Biological and cultural heritage;
- Research and communication;
- Complementary social and economic strategies.

In Burundi, there is a real threat of widespread degradation of natural resources and the environment. This process is exacerbated by population growth, the resulting high population density, the country's rugged terrain and poverty. Agriculture is recognized as the engine of the economy and the foundation for the country's development. It employs more than fourth fifths of the active population, represents 50 per cent of the GDP and accounts for 90 per cent of export revenues. The sector is, however, undermined by the poor growth of productivity primarily due to land erosion and overuse.

Although Burundi has not yet developed its action plan for the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, the national environmental strategy and the sectoral policy of the Ministry of Land Management and Environment give pride of place to the problem of land degradation and to planned desertification control measures. Accordingly, a national erosion control programme has been adopted under the Ministry, with a view to giving effect to the Government's political determination to combat land degradation desertification. The Government has also launched a large-scale reforestation programme to protect the deforested highland areas and to promote agroforestry as part of the general water and land conservation efforts.

III. MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION

The Director-General of the Office of Land Management and Environment has recently been appointed focal point for the Convention. Consequently, the Office of Land Management and Environment has become the national body responsible for coordination.

The Office of Land Management and Environment has four departments: land management and registration; forests; rural engineering and national land protection; and environment.

To ensure that, as a national coordinating body, it has a properly intersectoral and multidisciplinary character, a network has been established bringing together representatives of different stakeholder sectors, primarily those concerned by the problem of desertification, including local communities and non-governmental organizations. Two meetings have already been held since the appointment of the Director-General as the focal point. The intention is for such meetings to be held on a regular basis and to become the main forum for consultation.

At the operational level, there is still no work plan or programme which has been expressly drawn up for the implementation of the Convention, but such a plan is shortly to be formulated. The Office of Land Management and Environment is currently setting up an environmental information centre equipped with a geographic information system. This is a very valuable tool for the implementation of the Convention, particularly with regard to identifying areas of high risk.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION

Burundi has recently developed an environmental code, with a view to ensuring a clear legal framework in environmental matters. This code deals with environmental problems in a

general manner, but also contains certain specific articles. For example, article 24, paragraph 2, calls for the revegetation of appropriate mountain areas, highlands, bare lands, degraded farm lands and arid and semi-arid lands, for combating desertification and preventing erosion problems.

V. PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PROGRAMME

The participatory approach has been adopted as a strategy for the development and implementation of the national environmental strategy. By following this approach, the strategy is transformed into a grass-roots initiative and it has now been institutionalized in the sectoral policy of the Ministry of Land Management and Environment. By organizing courses at all levels, starting with the design stage and passing through the stage of pre-project analysis to a national approval course, the national environmental strategy has been made the result of a participatory process.

VI. CONSULTATIVE PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME AND THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES AND OTHER INTERESTED ENTITIES

The national environmental strategy was developed under a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) project. Although developed country partners were not involved, following the crisis which swept across Burundi, a round-table of donors was planned for May 2000, in order to give Burundi's traditional partners an opportunity to participate in the implementation of the Convention.

VII. MEASURES TAKEN OR PLANNED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT, TO CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES, TO IMPROVE INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION, TO IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE OF DESERTIFICATION AND TO MONITOR AND ASSESS THE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT

As pointed out above, Burundi is an essentially agricultural country and any measures to control erosion and desertification will automatically improve the economic climate. The national erosion control programme is an integral part of agricultural programmes, given that arable land is the only capital asset of the country's peasants.

VIII. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS FROM THE NATIONAL BUDGET IN SUPPORT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Burundi is currently in a problematic situation, following the suspension of bilateral cooperation by its traditional partners. Consequently, the country has been unable to undertake any special measures to facilitate access by local actors to funding sources. Government efforts are currently limited to funding erosion control activities and measures to protect the national land resources implemented by government agencies.

The Government intends, however, to submit specific projects at the international round table on the environmental action plan, which will form part of the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Summary

The phenomenon of desertification is an indisputable reality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and poses a wide range of problems and complications at the social, economic and environmental levels. The scale of the phenomenon in recent years, particularly in the country's southern border districts, necessitates urgent solutions.

Accordingly, by ratifying the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Congolese Government has undertaken to follow a new, more efficient approach, with a view to promoting country-wide development, starting with grass-roots communities, since efforts undertaken in the past both to combat desertification and to mitigate the adverse effects of drought failed to bring the desired results.

This new approach comprises measures to develop and to implement a national action programme for integrated and sustainable development. The measures are described in the following six chapters:

1. Strategies and priorities established within the framework of development policies

2. Institutional and legislative measures taken to implement the Convention

3. Participatory process in support of the preparation and implementation of the national action programme

4. Consultative process and partnership agreements with developed country Parties and other entities

5. Measures taken or planned within the framework of the national action programme or the natural resource management programme

6. Financial allocations for the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I. STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

In development matters, the policy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is essentially designed to improve the living conditions of grass-roots communities. Accordingly, the Government is endeavouring to achieve this overall aim by carrying out strategic priority

activities identified under the minimum three-year programme for the period 1997-1999, as revised for the period 1999-2001. This programme identifies the areas in which the Government policy is to be implemented, namely:

- Stabilization of the macroeconomic situation through the rehabilitation of the political, economic, financial, social and security environment;

- Rehabilitation of grass-roots infrastructures and land management systems through the active participation of the populations concerned;

- Revitalization of the national economy with a view to achieving an economic growth rate higher than the population growth rate (3.2 per cent, by 1984 FAO figures).

The strategies are based on an approach whereby efforts can be focused on the implementation of plans, programmes and other projects, thus facilitating overall development. The aim is to develop a global plan of environmental actions, designed to ensure the preservation of the environment and the management of natural resources and to address the phenomena of desertification and drought and all forms of environmental degradation.

II. INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION

Currently, the Office of the Secretary-General for Environment, Nature Conservation, Fisheries and Forests, which is responsible for all issues relating to the environment, at both the central and the provincial levels, is exercising the functions of the national coordination body, until such time as that body is established.

Specifically, a resource person, under the responsibility of the Secretary-General for the Environment, has been acting as focal point for the Convention since 1996, and ensuring coordination and follow-up in this area. To enable him to accomplish his tasks, the resource person has access to the facilities and equipment of the permanent secretariat of the Inter-Ministerial Environment Committee. In response to funding problems, the focal point relies heavily on contributions from developed country Parties, as provided for in articles 6 and 7 of the Convention.

In addition, a permanent secretariat has been established, with the role of ensuring ongoing consultation on environmental problems. These consultations take the form of a regular exchange of ideas among local partners representing different sectors (private and government), including non-governmental organizations, universities and scientific institutions.

With regard to implementation of the Convention, attention should also be drawn to the recent establishment of the National Environmental Information Centre, set up with the mandate to provide a reliable database on the environmental situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

With regard to legislative measures, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is developing, at the national level, environmental management actions through its existing plans,

programmes and projects. At both subregional and regional levels, the country fully subscribes to the activities planned under the regional environmental information management programme (PRGIE) and the national management and coordination unit. It also encourages any initiative to promote sustainable development of natural resources, such as those undertaken by the Central African Regional Programme for the Environment (CARPE), programme for the Conservation and Rational Use of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (ECOFAC), the Central Africa Management of Biodiversity project (CAMBIO) and others.

III. PARTICIPATORY PROCESS IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME

Currently, many natural resource users have no access to adequate information regarding the Convention; this considerably limits their participation in the implementation of the national action programme. The organization of a first information and awareness-raising workshop will, however, go some way towards remedying this situation. The workshop will be attended by stakeholders working within bodies which have a significant and serious impact on the phenomenon of desertification and on drought effects (non-governmental organizations and public bodies).

IV. CONSULTATIVE PROCESS AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES AND OTHER ENTITIES

In this area, the Democratic Republic of the Congo favours the links which already obtain between it and its bilateral and multilateral partners, using these contacts to strengthen their investment activities in the country.

The multilateral partners include such organizations of the United Nations system as UNDP, FAO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), bodies of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), such as the African Development Bank, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the European Union. Prominent among the country's bilateral partners are Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Where local and national consultation is concerned, particular attention is given to bodies promoting community-level capacity building activities under a participatory programme. Such bodies include development and environmental non-governmental organizations, cooperatives, women's and young people's associations, and government bodies dealing with environment-related issues. The level of participation of these bodies depends on the technical, human and financial resources of the national action programme.

V. MEASURES TAKEN OR PLANNED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME OR THE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

A number of measures relating to natural resource conservation, desertification and mitigation of the effects of drought are currently being implemented, countrywide, through specific or sectoral programmes. These address such issues as water resources, in particular, the conservation of water and soil resources through measures to combat erosion in agricultural land; the establishment of woodland areas in the country's savannah zone, for the provision of fuel-wood; forestry projects for the production of construction timber; rangeland management and forest inventory measures; and regulations regarding bushfires, forest product use and steep slope cultivation. Programmes which have tangible results are duly encouraged while those with less impressive results are reoriented.

Among new activities planned under the Convention, mention should be made of the collective and responsible management of land and natural resources, facilitated by the implementation of appropriate arrangements for the gradual shift of responsibility from the public authorities to private organizations; the synergy deriving from the implementation of other conventions, such as those on biological diversity, climate change and protection of the ozone layer, and the Ramsar Convention; measures to diversify and step up production to enhance the social and economic development of degraded areas; land conservation and improvement measures, using practices which enhance soil fertility and water management; training for local populations in production and management methods and in land management, in particular for women; support for the gathering and management of climate, meteorological and hydrological data, with a view to the conduct of further research. These last-mentioned measures will also help in the development of an early-warning system.

Under this chapter, attention should also be drawn to national capacity-building measures, through on-the-job training of local populations and by providing training abroad for persons from traditional natural resource management institutions, comprising specialization, further training, study trips and participation in courses and workshops.

It should also be noted that the national action programme addresses the following areas: identification of the underlying causes of the effects of drought and the formulation of appropriate policies and strategies capable of preventing and reversing the phenomenon of desertification; promotion of awareness-raising and mesological educational measures, including for young people and women, to raise their awareness and develop in them a positive and participatory attitude to the protection of the natural resources.

Management training and follow-up measures are oriented towards improving the economic environment, with a view to substantially alleviating poverty, through income-boosting and job-creation schemes; the conservation and protection of natural resources; creation of a more efficient institutional framework; improving knowledge of the phenomenon of desertification, through training and research measures; monitoring and evaluation of the effects of drought; maintenance of good relations with the subregional and regional programmes; building of local capacities, through the provision of information, training and other organizational measures for local populations.

VI. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification requires substantial levels of financial resources which the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently not in a position to provide, particularly owing to the war situation in the country. The country's economic base has been seriously damaged and it has to rest its hopes on contributions from developed country Parties, in accordance with the provisions of articles 6 and 7 of the Convention.

The amount necessary for implementation of the national programme of action is currently estimated at $646,077, for the two planned areas of activity.

Where the Government is concerned, its contribution will be effected through the implementation of the programme, with the provision of premises, office equipment and staff for the national programme of action.

The level of coverage of funding needs is currently too low. To date, only some $8,000 has been released, out of the stated requirements of $306,208, representing coverage of approximately 2.60 per cent. Set against total funding needs, this level of coverage is almost negligible, at 1.2 per cent.

In view of the foregoing, the Democratic Republic of the Congo requests that particular attention be given to its situation by the permanent secretariat of the Convention. For the national programme of action to succeed, regular funding would need to be provided for its various activities.

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